

through 25, 38 through 50, 63 through 75 and 83, is directed to an exposure apparatus, classified in class 355, subclass 18.

The Examiner contends that the inventions of Groups I and II are patentably distinct, apparently because they are related as process and apparatus for its practice, respectively, and because they have acquired a separate status in the art based on different classification, such that the fields of search are not coextensive, requiring separate examination. These contentions are respectfully traversed.

Applicants note that the inventions of Groups I and II are so closely related in the field of mask pattern exposure that a proper search of any of the claims would, of necessity, require a search of the others. Thus, it is submitted that all of the claims can be searched simultaneously, and that a duplicative search, with possibly inconsistent results, may occur if the restriction requirement is maintained.

Applicants submit that any nominal burden placed upon the Examiner to search an additional subclass or two,

necessary to determine the art relevant to Applicants' overall invention is significantly outweighed by the public interest in not having to obtain and study several separate patents in order to have available all of the issued patent claims covering Applicants' invention. The alternative is to proceed with the filing of multiple applications, each consisting of generally the same disclosure, and each being subjected to essentially the same search, perhaps by different Examiners on different occasions. This places an unnecessary burden on both the Patent and Trademark Office and on Applicants.

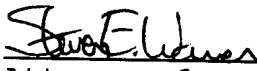
In the interest of economy, for the Office, for the public-at-large and for Applicants, reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement are requested.

Nevertheless, in order to comply with the requirements of 37 CFR 1.143, Applicants provisionally elect, with traverse, to prosecute the invention of Group II, namely claims 13 through 25, 38 through 50, 63 through 75 and 83.

Favorable consideration and an early passage to issue are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in  
our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010.  
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Respectfully submitted,

  
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